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DE RUEHLB #0630 1291158
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 081158Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1753
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2217
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2522
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 000630

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO AND NEA/ELA; ALSO FOR A/S SILVERBERG AND
PDAS WARLICK
NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/YERGER/GAVITO
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/KUMAR/PHEE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/07/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [SY](#) [IR](#) [UNSC](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: MITRI AND SINIORA STILL LEERY ABOUT
PUBLIC DEBATE ON UNSCR 1559

REF: A. BEIRUT 618
[1](#)B. SISON-WELCH TELECON 5/8/2008

Classified By: CDA Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) The Charge spoke with Acting Foreign Minister Tariq Mitri twice May 8 to urge him to ask the Lebanese Mission to the UN to propose a public session at the May 8 UNSC briefing on UNSCR 1559. Mitri said at 1330 local time that he and Prime Minister Siniora had "no objection" in principle to a public session, but needed some clarifications. End Summary.

"OK, But Where Will This Lead?"

[1](#)2. (C) The Charge first spoke with Acting FM Mitri at 1130 local time to urge that the scheduled 1000 May 8 UNSCR 1559 briefing be made an open session. Such a request would need to come from the Lebanese Mission at the UN, she suggested. Mitri said that he would need to consult with Prime Minister Siniora. Mitri telephoned Charge at 1330 to report that he had just finished a long consultation with PM Siniora. Charge spoke of an open session's merits, including drawing international attention to Lebanon's continuing tensions, which were provoked by Hizballah's escalation. Mitri responded that he and Siniora remained leery (Ref A), citing concern for potential Israeli, Syrian, and Iranian interventions. The Charge responded that, in light of the fact that protests continue in Beirut and that most international flights into Beirut remained suspended for a second day, the world needed to hear the truth about conditions on the ground in Lebanon. Strike now while the iron is hot, advised the Charge, and while there is growing international concern for the legitimate Siniora government's challenge from an increasingly bold Hizballah.

[1](#)3. (C) Mitri said that he and PM Siniora had "no objection" to the public session, but asked, "Where will this lead? What would the orientation of this public session be?" The Charge emphasized to need for a decision by the GOL to be transmitted to New York by the opening of business on May 8.

[1](#)4. (C) Mitri said he was hesitant to wake up the Lebanese Ambassador to the UN, Nawaf Salam, so early in the day. The

Charge mentioned that she had already had two conversations about Lebanon with NEA A/S Welch that morning, Eastern Standard Time. Accepting that this is a crucial day for Lebanon at the UNSC, Mitri agreed to wake up Salam in order to begin consultations as soon as possible with U.S. Ambassador to the UN Khalilzad.

15. (C) The Charge concluded the call by informing Mitri that Ambassador Khalilzad's points for the UNSCR 1559 briefing would include strong language in support of Lebanon. These points would emphasize that the current troubles are the result of severe provocation by Hizballah and the opposition.

SISON